

4.10 PARKS AND RECREATION

This section includes discussions of impacts and mitigation measures related to parks and recreation in the study area. This section will focus primarily on the identified Preferred Alternative, the (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative.

The additional analyses in this section were the result of refined engineering, responding to comments received during the public comment period of the August 2001 DEIR/EIS, and/or additional planning efforts. As discussed in Section 2.2-1, the added limits to the (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not contribute to any new environmental impacts. Potential environmental impacts from this added portion have been previously analyzed as part of the Full Build Alternative (SR-22/SR-55 HOV connector) and determined not to be substantial to Parks and Recreational facilities. The comments and responses to comments are attached as Appendix A of this FEIS/EIR (volumes II & III).

4.10.1 PUBLIC PARKS AND GOLF COURSES

This section discusses potential impacts to parks, golf courses, tennis facilities, trails and schools along the SR-22/West Orange County Connection study area. Please refer to Figure 3.10-1, City/regional Parks and Golf Courses along the study area. The impacts discussed will pertain to noise, visual and right-of-way. As discussed in Sections 4.9 and 4.13, landscaping will be removed in portions of the SR-22 corridor to accommodate the proposed widening. Since these public parks and golf courses are adjacent to the freeway, the noise level as well as the view of the freeway may be altered slightly as a result of the vegetation removal. Where applicable, the possible impacts will be discussed at each location below. Further information regarding the TSM Expanded Bus Service, Full Build and Reduced Build Alternatives can be found in Section 4.10 of the August 2001 DEIR/EIS.

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Edison Park (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Edison Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would also be minimal.

Rossmoor Park (Rossmoor). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Rossmoor Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would also be minimal.

Old Ranch Tennis Club (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of the Old Ranch Tennis Club for right-of-way. Visual impacts and impacts to accessibility would be altered slightly due to vegetation removal from the freeway and possible short-term construction impacts. Noise impacts would also be minimal.

Blue Bell Park (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of the Blue Bell Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise levels would be minimally increased.

Aster Park (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Edison Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would be minimal.

Almond (Shapell) Park (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of the Almond Park for right-of-way. Accessibility to this park would not be affected. Noise levels would increase minimally.

Heather Park (Seal Beach). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Heather Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would be minimal.

Westgrove Park (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Westgrove Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly; noise impacts would be minimal.

Edgar Park (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Edgar Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be altered slightly due to vegetation removal from the freeway, and accessibility may be temporarily affected due to possible short-term construction impacts.

Golden West Park (Westminster). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Golden West Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts and impacts to accessibility would be altered slightly due to vegetation removal from the freeway and possible short-term construction impacts. Noise impacts would be minimal.

Garden Grove Park (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of the Garden Grove Park for right-of-way. Impacts to accessibility would be minimal during construction activities. Noise levels would increase minimally.

Woodbury Park (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Woodbury Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would be minimal.

Twin Lakes Park (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Twin Lakes Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be minimal, as the view of the freeway could change slightly. Noise impacts would be minimal.

Santiago Park (Santa Ana). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Santiago Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be altered slightly due to vegetation removal from the freeway, and accessibility may be limited temporarily due to short-term construction impacts.

Pacific Electric Commemorative Area (Garden Grove). This commemorative area, which is owned by OCTA, functions as a passive open space/park. Currently screened from the elevated SR-22 by vegetation within the freeway right-of-way, this passive park would be affected by a substantial reduction in the screening vegetation, as described in Section 4.13. The loss of mature vegetation would be a potential substantial visual impact to this park-like setting. Noise levels are high at this location, over 70 dBA based on the nearest receiver analyzed in Section 4.9, and would increase slightly, but this impact is not considered extensive by the Department because the noise level increase would be less than 12 dBA. No noise barriers are proposed at this location, which is surrounded by commercial uses and busy surface streets. There would be minimal impacts to accessibility. Access to the park would not be affected. Although there would be indirect impacts to the commemorative area, they would not substantially impair its use. No land currently used for the commemorative area would be acquired for the right-of-way.

River View Public Golf Course (Santa Ana). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not cause substantial impact to River View Public Golf Course. No land would be acquired for right-of-way from the recreational facility. As described in Section 4.13, the visual impacts at this location would be minimal. Noise and accessibility impacts would also be minimal.

Colonel William W. Eldridge (Fallbrook) Park (Santa Ana). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require direct use of any of the Eldridge Park property for right-of-way. There would be minimal impacts to accessibility. However, there would be few visible physical changes, so visual and traffic noise impacts would be minimal.

Hart Park (Orange). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any of Hart Park for right-of-way. Visual impacts would be altered slightly due to vegetation removal from

the freeway, and accessibility would be temporarily affected due to short-term construction impacts.

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Because the No Build Alternative would not include construction, except as addressed in previous environmental documents, there would be no impacts to any parks or recreational facilities related to this alternative.

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

Because the TSM/Expanded Bus Service Alternative would include only minor construction, no impacts to any parks or recreational facilities related to this alternative are expected to occur. In some cases, parks may become more accessible due to improved transit provided by this alternative.

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The Full Build Alternative would not require any of the following recreational facilities: Old Ranch Tennis Club, Blue Bell Park, Almond/Shapell Park (Seal Beach), Garden Grove Park (Garden Grove), Santiago Park, Colonel William W. Eldridge/Fallbrook Park, Willowick Municipal Golf Course (Santa Ana), Hart Park, Yorba Park (Orange).

Pacific Electric Commemorative Area (Garden Grove). This commemorative area, which is owned by OCTA, functions as a passive open space/park. Currently screened from the elevated SR-22 by vegetation within the freeway right-of-way, this passive park would be affected by a substantial reduction in the screening vegetation, as described in Section 4.13.

River View Public Golf Course (Santa Ana). The Full Build Alternative would not cause substantial impact to River View Public Golf Course. See discussion in (A) PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE, above.

Spurgeon Park (Santa Ana). This park is adjacent to Spurgeon Intermediate School, south of the former Pacific Electric right-of-way segment. Implementation of the Pacific Electric Arterial would remove the existing historical bridge visible from the park and place an elevated structure in the right-of-way, along with off-ramps. The addition of an elevated structure in an area currently used as visual open space would be a potentially substantial visual impact. Increases in ambient noise levels are not anticipated to affect this park due to its distance from the right-of-way. The visual impacts would not affect use of the facility, and there would be no impacts to accessibility or access to the park under this alternative.

For a complete discussion of impacts of the Full Build Alternative on parks in the project area, refer to Section 4.10 of the August 2001 DEIR/EIS.

4.10.2 TRAILS/BIKEWAYS

Impacts to trails and bikeways are discussed below. A "bikeway" refers to a paved Class I (off-road) route, and "trail" to an unpaved Class I route.

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE /(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Los Alamitos Coyote Creek Channel Bikeway (Los Alamitos). The class I Los Alamitos/Coyote Creek Channel Bikeway runs parallel to I-605 within the study area and would not be physically affected by any right-of-way expansion proposed by the (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative. Visual impacts would be minimal.

Hoover Street Bikeway (Westminster). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would have minimal impact to the class II Hoover Street Bikeway. SR-22 would be slightly widened at the point where it passes over the existing Hoover Street Bikeway, resulting in minimal impacts. The trail would remain open during construction except under the freeway; detours will be developed in coordination with the City of Westminster and bicycle advocacy groups as part of the Traffic Management Plan.

Santa Ana River Trail and Bikeway (Santa Ana). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would include widening of the SR-22 bridge deck at this class I trail, and two new structures crossing the trails (northbound I-5/southbound SR-57 connector to westbound SR-22 and the new Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive off-ramp from the southbound SR-57). The Santa Ana River Trail and Santa Ana River Bikeway are 100-percent physically separated from vehicular traffic. The SR-57 off-ramp to Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive would sever the Santa Ana River Trail and Bikeway, unless grade separations are provided at the new crossing. (Bicycles, pedestrians and equestrians would not be allowed within the right-of-way of the new roadway, so they would not be able to cross, even at grade.) Grade separations are included in the project design. This would also constitute a substantial visual impact. This facility will remain open during construction; a temporary detour plan will be provided in coordination with the City of Orange.

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Because the No Build Alternative would not include construction, except as addressed in previous environmental documents, there would be no impacts to trails related to this alternative.

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

The TSM/Expanded Bus Service Alternative would have no impacts to trails.

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Los Alamitos Coyote Creek Channel Trail (Los Alamitos). The class I Los Alamitos/Coyote Creek Channel Trail runs parallel to I-605 within the study area and would not be physically affected by any right-of-way expansion proposed by the Full Build Alternative. Visual impacts would be minimal.

Hoover Street Trail and Bikeway (Westminster). The Full Build Alternative would have minimal impact to the class II Hoover Street Trail. SR-22 would be slightly widened at the point where it passes over the existing Hoover Street Trail, resulting in minimal impacts.

Santa Ana River Trail and Bikeway (Santa Ana). The Full Build Alternative would include widening of the SR-22 bridge deck at this class I trail and bikeway, two new structures crossing the trails (northbound I-5/southbound SR-57 connector to westbound SR-22 and the new Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive off-ramp from the southbound SR-57), and another new structure crossing the trail carrying the Pacific Electric Arterial. The Santa Ana River Trail/Bikeway is 100-percent physically separated from vehicular traffic. The widened SR-22

structure and the structure carrying the northbound I-5/southbound SR-57 connector to the westbound SR-22 would not substantially impair the trail because these structures would be elevated above the trail. However, the SR-57 off-ramp to Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive and the west end of the Pacific Electric Arterial bridge (but not the elevated east end) would each sever the Santa Ana River unless grade separations are provided at the new crossings. (Bicycles, pedestrians, and equestrians would not be allowed within the right-of-way of the new roadways, so they would not be able to cross, even at grade.) This would also be a potentially substantial visual impact. Mitigation is proposed in Section 4.10 to vertically realign the trail at both of these locations to provide grade separations and allow continued and full use of the Santa Ana River Trail/Bikeway once construction is completed.

Santiago Creek Trail (Santa Ana and Orange). The Full Build Alternative would have minimal impact on the class I and II Santiago Creek Trail. As part of the proposed improvements within this segment, there would be a slight widening of the SR-22 bridge deck where it crosses the trail. A small amount of vegetation would be removed, but these physical changes would have a minimal visual impact. There would be continual use of this facility with a detour.

Pacific Electric Right-of-Way Trail. The Full Build Alternative would preclude the use of the former Pacific Electric right-of-way as a class I trail, as proposed in the City of Santa Ana Circulation Element of their General Plan

Thresholds of Significance for CEQA:

- Preclusion of the Pacific Electric right-of-way trail and break in continuity of Santa Ana River Trail

CEQA Findings:

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Santa Ana River Trail and Bikeway (Santa Ana). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would include widening of the SR-22 bridge deck at this class I trail and bikeway, and two new structures crossing the trails (northbound I-5/southbound SR-57 connector to westbound SR-22 and the new Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive off-ramp from the southbound SR-57). The Santa Ana River Trail and Bikeway are completely separated from vehicular traffic. The SR-57 off-ramp to Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive would sever the Santa Ana River Bikeway and Trail, unless grade separations are provided at the new crossing. (Bicycles, pedestrians and equestrians would not be allowed within the right-of-way of the new roadway, so they would not be able to cross, even at grade.) The residual impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

The No Build Alternative would have no impacts to trails.

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

The TSM/Expanded Bus Service Alternative would have no impacts to trails.

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Santa Ana River Trail/Bikeway (Santa Ana). The Full Build Alternative would include widening of the SR-22 bridge deck at this class I trail and bikeway, two new structures crossing the trails (northbound I-5/southbound SR-57 connector to westbound SR-22 and the

new Metropolitan Drive/The City Drive off-ramp from the southbound SR-57), and another new structure crossing the trail carrying the Pacific Electric Arterial. The severance of the Santa Ana River Trail/Bikeway would be a potentially significant visual impact.

Pacific Electric Right-of-Way Trail. The Full Build Alternative would preclude the use of the former Pacific Electric right-of-way as a class I trail, as proposed in the City of Santa Ana Circulation Element of their General Plan. The Santa Ana River trail would have grade separations to maintain the trail's continuity. The residual impacts would be less than significant with mitigation incorporated.

A full discussion of impacts of the Full Build Alternative on the Pacific Electric right of way and continuity of the Santa Ana River Trail/Bikeway is in the August 2001 DEIR/EIS.

4.10.3 SCHOOLS WITH RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The impacts to schools with recreational facilities within the proposed project area are discussed below. Analysis is given even though the stated schools' recreational facilities are not generally open to the public. All districts within the study area have closed campus policies, with use of campus facilities only available by permission of school officials.

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

A complete discussion of schools affected by the (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative can be found in Section 4.6.5 of this document.

Bolsa Grande High School (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require any Bolsa Grande High School property for right-of-way.

Jordan Intermediate School/Jordan Secondary Learning Center (Garden Grove). The (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative would not require right-of-way at Jordan Intermediate School, and visual impacts would be minimal.

Excelsior Elementary School (Garden Grove). Impacts to this elementary school would be minimal. No right-of-way would be needed at this site.

Sunnyside Elementary School (Garden Grove). Located north of SR-22, this elementary school has distant views of SR-22. The site is separated by the parking lots of car dealerships. Visible physical changes at this location would be minor reductions in landscaping. This would result in minimal visual impact to the school. Noise levels would not increase beyond the FHWA/Department criteria.

Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School (Garden Grove). Eisenhower Elementary School is currently separated from SR-22 by a noise barrier and vegetation. A full discussion of impacts at all of these schools by the (Enhanced) Reduced Build Alternative is in the August 2001 DEIR/EIS, under "Reduced Build Alternative."

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Because the No Build Alternative would not include construction, except as addressed in previous environmental documents, there would be no impacts to recreational facilities at schools related to this alternative.

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

The TSM/Expanded Bus Service Alternative would have no impacts to recreational facilities at schools.

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would not require right-of-way at any of the following schools' recreational facilities: Bolsa Grande High School, Excelsior Elementary School, Jordan Intermediate School/Jordan Secondary Learning Center, Sunnyside Elementary School, Dwight D. Eisenhower Elementary School (Garden Grove), Fairhaven Elementary (Santa Ana), Spurgeon Intermediate School (Santa Ana).

A full discussion of impacts at schools throughout the project area by the Full Build Alternative is in Section 4.10 of the August 2001 DEIR/EIS.

4.10.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

PAR-(E)RB-1. At all crossings of the Santa Ana River trail, grade separations for the trail will be provided in order to maintain its continuity.

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

None required.

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

None required.

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

PAR-FB-1. At all crossings of the Santa Ana River trail and bikeway, grade separations will be provided in order to maintain the trail's continuity.

4.10.5 RESIDUAL IMPACTS AFTER MITIGATION

A. PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE/(ENHANCED) REDUCED BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Less than substantial.

B. OTHER ALTERNATIVES

1. NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE

None

2. TSM/EXPANDED BUS SERVICE ALTERNATIVE

None

3. FULL BUILD ALTERNATIVE

Because the Full Build Alternative would preclude the class I trail proposed by the City of Santa Ana for the former Pacific Electric right-of-way, and because no mitigation is available to prevent this impact, an impact to this proposed trail would remain after mitigation.

Substantial visual impacts would remain after mitigation at the following parks and recreation resources: Pacific Electric Commemorative Area and Willowick Municipal Golf Course. See Section 4.13.